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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00 L-03 H-01
/064 W
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R 141547Z MAR 78 ZFD
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6656
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 08198

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS PEPR EG US
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN VIEWS ON U.S. AIRCRAFT PACKAGE

SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH MILITARY APPARENTLY UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT F5E'S, POLITICALLY MINDED EGYPTIANS CONSIDER AIRCRAFT PACKAGE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF PRECEDENT IT SETS FOR LINKING AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL WITH AIRCRAFT FOR ARAB STATES. PRESS PUTTING BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT ON PACKAGE. GOE CLOSELY WATCHING ADMIN-ISTRATION'S DETERMINATION AND ABILITY TO KEEP PACKAGE IN TACT. END SUMMARY.

1. THERE IS WIDESPREAD EGYPTIAN INTEREST IN U.S. AIR-CRAFT "PACKAGE" FOR EGYPT, ISRAEL AND SAUDI ARABIA. OPINIONS DIFFER WIDELY ABOUT ITS MILITARY AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. WE HAVE RECEIVED SECONDHAND REPORTS FROM EGYPTIANS, WHO CLAIM TO HAVE IT FROM AIR FORCE CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICERS, THAT MILITARY OPINION IS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT F5E'S FOR EGYPT. KNOWLEDGE OF F5E CAPABILITIES IS APPARENTLY NOT WELL KNOWN WITH RESULT THEY CONSIDER IT WELL BELOW PERFORMANCE OF MIG 21. KNOWLEDGEABLE MFA OFFICIALS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE LESS INTERESTED IN THE MILITARY CAPABILITY OF THE F5E AND VIEW THE PACKAGE IN POLITICAL TERMS. AS RESULT, THEY FIND IT HIGHLY SIG-

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NIFICANT, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF THE PRECEDENT IT SETS FOR LINKING AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL WITH AIRCRAFT FOR ARAB STATES. THEY BELIEVE THAT IT IS FOR THIS REASON ISRAELIS HAVE MOUNTED A MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO DISMANTLE THE PACKAGE.

2. GOE DETERMINATION TO PUT PACKAGE IN BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT REFLECTED IN RECENT PRESS COVERAGE. ROSE EL YUSSUU OF MARCH 13 HIGHLY PLEASED AND SAYS F5E TO EGYPT REPRESENT A "CHANGE IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY" AS DO F-15'S TO SAUDI ARABIA. MAGAZINE EXPECTS "EXTREMELY TOUGH CONFRONTATION" BETWEEN CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS OVER PACKAGE. MARCH 13 OCTOBER PRAISED F5 AS AN AIRCRAFT WHICH "FAR SUPERIOR" TO THE MIG 17 IN SPEED, MANEUVERABILITY AND ARMAMENTS. ARTICLE ALSO MADE FIRST PUBLIC MENTION OF AMERICAN MILITARY MISSION TO EGYPT "IN THE COMING FEW DAYS" TO CONCLUDE THE DEAL. SALE OF F5'S IS CONSIDERED BY OCTOBER AS FIRST TANGIBLE STEP IN EGYPTIAN-AMERICAN MILITARY COOPERATION. IT EX-PECTED TO BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER POSITIVE STEPS DURING MINWAR GAMASY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO U.S. (WHICH PRESS HAS MENTIONED FREQUENTLY). PACKAGE AS A WHOLE IS SEEN AS DEMONSTRATING A LESS BIASED U.S. POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL.

3. COMMENT: POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AIRCRAFT PACKAGE HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEGUN TO SINK IN ON EGYPTIAN
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OFFICIALS, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF ISRAELI EFFORTS, LED BY WEIZMAN, TO QUASH THE PACKAGE. ADMINISTRATION'S DETERMINATION AND ABILITY TO KEEP THE PACKAGE IN TACT BEING CLOSELY WATCHED FOR THAT REASON. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Errors: N/A
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Format: TEL
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TAGS: MASS, PEPR, EG, US
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